

# CHARLOTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Operations Manual

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|  | <b>General Order Number:</b><br>12.21           | <b>Subject:</b><br>License Plate Readers   |  |
|   | <b>Effective Date:</b>                          | <b>08/28/2013</b>  |   |
|   | <b>Reviewed Date:</b>                           | <b>08/2018</b>   |   |
|   | <b>Revised Date:</b>                            | <b>02/12/2018</b>  |   |
|   | <b>Rescinds/Amends:</b>                         | <b>NEW</b>   |   |
|   | <b>Authority of Sheriff of Charlotte County</b> |  |   |

**Related References/Accreditation Standards: CALEA 41.3.9**

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| <u><b>Change Notice:</b></u><br>Former Section B.4 (deletion: VISCE)<br>Section C.3<br>Section E.2.c.3 | Section F.1 – 2<br>Section F.4<br>Section G.2 |
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A. It is the policy of the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office to enhance patrol capabilities by utilizing the latest technologies for crime prevention and apprehension of criminals. License Plate Readers (LPRs) utilize such technology to scan, detect, and identify license plate numbers which appear on selected Hot Lists. License Plate Readers authorized by the agency will be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and this policy.

B. Definitions

1. **HOT LISTS** – A list of stolen plates and vehicles entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database and the Florida Crime Information Center (FCIC) database, AMBER Alerts, Department of Homeland Security watch lists, as well as any information that is entered manually by the operating member.
2. **HOT LIST DOWNLOAD** – The method by which the Hot List data is transferred to a computer within the patrol vehicle.
3. **LICENSE PLATE READER (LPR)** – A specialized system consisting of equipment designed to read, store and check license plates. The LPR is commonly mounted to a patrol vehicle and connected to a computer within the vehicle. However, there are other device configurations available. (Hand-held, Stationary/Fixed)

C. Responsibilities

1. Members utilizing License Plate Readers will ensure the confidentiality, security and integrity of data captured, stored, and/or retained by the LPR system is maintained.
2. When the License Plate Readers system plays an integral part in the development of probable cause for an arrest, the arresting deputy will document such in their case narrative.
3. **The Intelligence Unit** and the assigned operator will be responsible for overseeing the technological portion of the License Plate Reader Program. All License Plate Reader Devices approved will be inspected and installed as determined by the **Intelligence Commander**.

4. LPR Devices in need of repair or replacement will be submitted for repair through the supervisor.
- D. [CALEA 41.3.9(c)] Training - Members will complete agency approved training prior to being authorized to use the License Plate Readers device. Documented training may include review of manufacturer's recommendations and policy guidelines for use.
- E. [CALEA 41.3.9(a)] Guidelines for Use
  1. License Plate Reader systems, associated equipment and databases are authorized for official law enforcement purposes only. Any member who misuses the License Plate Reader equipment and associated databases or data may be subject to disciplinary action.
  2. The License Plate Reader device reads the license plates of moving or parked motor vehicles using LPR Optical Character Recognition Technology and compares against a Hot List. Additional features of the LPR system include searching and flagging vehicles for official investigative purposes.
    - a. A complete Hot List download is performed on a daily basis as an automated process of the LPR program.
    - b. Manual additions to the in house Hot List can be made to the system by the operator, Intelligence unit and other authorized users as needed for investigative purposes. Examples where manual entry of a hot list or license plate number may be included:
      - 1) Be On Look Out (BOLO)
      - 2) Attempt to Locate
      - 3) Motorist overdue to destination
      - 4) AMBER/SILVER Alert
      - 5) Child Abduction
      - 6) Wanted Person
      - 7) Missing Person
      - 8) Registered Sexual Predators
      - 9) Authorized CCSO Intelligence projects or programs
    - c. During operation, License Plate Reader "hits" are indicated by an audible and visual alarm. An LPR "hit" shall not be used as the sole reason for a traffic stop or enforcement contact until all provisions contained in this section have been satisfied. Contact with the vehicle and its occupants will only be made after the "hit" is confirmed.
      - 1) The member receiving the notification must first visually verify that the Hot List entry matches the digital image displayed by the LPR. If, for any reason it does not match, the "hit" will be rejected. If, however, it does match, the "hit" will be accepted and the member will verify the "hit" through NCIC/FCIC.
      - 2) Unless separate probable cause exists, officers will not stop or detain a vehicle based solely on a hit from the LPR system which has not been confirmed.
      - 3) After stopping the vehicle **for a lawful reason**, the violation will be confirmed via central communications, **and proper action will be taken.**

F. [CALEA 41.3.9(b)(d)] Data Security, Collection and Retention

1. All data and images gathered **from the LPR system** is for official purposes only. Since data may contain confidential information, it is not open for public review. Data may be shared with other law enforcement officials for law enforcement purposes only.
2. Access to **the LPR system** software is limited to those authorized for law enforcement and investigative purposes.
3. [CALEA 41.3.9(d)] LPR data captured will be transferred from the field units to the agency servers automatically.
4. [CALEA 41.3.9(d)] Access to LPR data downloaded to the server will be limited to only those authorized. Secure storage of data is maintained by **the Intelligence Unit (Technical Surveillance Team)** and in accordance with Florida Division of Archives General Records Schedule unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become evidence in a criminal or civil action. In the event that the data may become evidence in official proceedings, the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and entered into evidence by the case agent.

G. Maintenance:

1. Members assigned License Plate Readers equipment are responsible for ensuring functionality, camera alignment and preventative maintenance is conducted in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Repairs of damaged or non-functional LPRs will be submitted for repair in accordance with policy. LPR equipment that falls outside expected functionality shall be removed from service until deficiencies have been corrected.
2. **The Intelligence Commander or designee** will be responsible for overseeing the installation, implementation, and maintenance of the LPR. In the event the LPR needs repair, the member should advise **the Intelligence Commander or designee** and make arrangements for repair.
3. Members assigned LPR equipment will clean camera lenses at the beginning and ending of the members shift. Any damage observed shall be immediately reported to a supervisor.